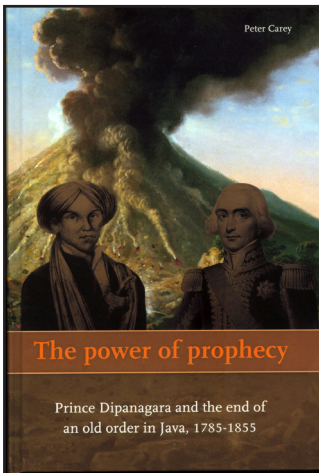


art. The information about this choreography is very important for the development of traditional arts whose focus has shifted from trance elements to the aesthetic aspects of modern art.

In the last section, Victoria explains that the government, in this case the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Kediri town seeks to modernize the horse dances into a form of traditional Javanese drama by prioritizing the aesthetic aspects and reducing the trance in order to preserve the genre. Victoria's book provides the insight that any genre of marginalized culture has an equal role in extending cultural knowledge. Observers as well as cultural researchers, therefore, should read this book.

Peter Carey, *The power of prophecy; Prince Dipanagara and the end of an old order in Java, 1785-1855*. Second Edition. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008, xx + 970 pp. [First Edition in 2007; *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 249.] ISBN 978 90 6718 303 1. Price: EUR 49.50 (hard cover).



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Rarely has a figure in Indonesia's history and his times been afforded an in-depth study of this magnitude. Peter Carey has set himself the Herculean task of not only describing the figure of Diponegoro (Yogyakarta, 11 November 1785 - Makassar, 8 January 1855) but of putting him in the context of the economic, religious, and political times of his days. He describes Diponegoro's journey from birth through young adolescence to adulthood and from the Central Javanese *kraton* in Yogyakarta to his abodes of banishment in Celebes, first in Manado and subsequently in Makassar. However, more importantly, he describes the situation in south-central Java at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century in stunning detail. The book contains twelve chapters and sixteen appendices and totals 970 pages. The chapters all end in their own conclusions and describe events in and around Diponegoro's life in strict chronological order. The appendices contain family trees and lists of wives, children, family, major officials of the Yogyakarta and Dutch administration and many others and provide much information not easily available elsewhere. The book ends in a glossary of Javanese words, a bibliography, and an extensive index. The book contains also several maps

and illustrations of Diponegoro and many of his protagonists and of people important in the Javanese world during his lifetime. It is also enlivened with pictures portraying people in battle dress, ordinary citizens, landscapes, and letters written by our Prince as well as some illustrations of the *Buku Kedhung Kebo* (KITLV Oriental Ms. 13), a wonderfully illustrated manuscript in the possession of the KITLV at Leiden.

Writing a biography of a person who lived in the past and in a different place on the globe is not an easy matter. Everything depends on the sources and how we interpret them. The sources available for this exercise differ vastly in many respects. Language-wise Carey had to contend with Javanese, Dutch, English, Indonesian, German, and French, and with Latin, Javanese, and Arabic scripts, in printed and in manuscript form. The sources differ in nature in other aspects as well and cover *babad*, historical works by later scholars, letters, diaries, reports, financial reports, etcetera. The interpretation of these various languages in their contemporaneous usages in the past and the present alone is quite something, making sense of them is often quite something else still, especially if we look at the *babad* materials Carey used, most of which have not been edited and manuscripts had to be used. In short, Carey has covered most available material in order to describe Diponegoro and his times. Carey is acutely aware of the fact that his sources vary and that they may not always be as trustworthy as he would have liked them to be. We should never forget that the sources were not written for the future scholar and that they often represent or misrepresent what was in the minds of the contemporary authors and were often written with specific objectives in mind, the truth not necessarily being one of them. The task Carey found himself faced with was that seemingly similar sources also apparently varied over time and that emphasis found in the sources in one period was absent in similar sources dating from another time (for example, the Residency Letters that changed from containing litanies of treats and procrastination into the minutiae of colonial administration, pp. 345-346). That truth and diplomacy were not always compatible is revealed poignantly, for instance, in the letter Raffles sent to Lord Minto after the fall of the *kraton* of Yogyakarta in 1912 where he claimed that there was "the earnest desire that was evident in all to render the effects of victory as little disgusting and ruinous to the vanquished as possible" (p. 348). Indeed, Carey rightfully exposed the untrustworthiness of this but how many other inconsistencies and beside-the-truths are out there in the sources, but which are impossible to detect? For instance, Carey voices his surprise that Diponegoro is nowhere mentioned in Crawford's voluminous correspondence whereas Diponegoro himself said that Crawford discussed "everything in person with his father and himself" (p. 316). Diponegoro's self-claimed influence on Crawford is negated again on page 375 where becomes clear that he did not even mention him as an important person at court in his list he drew up for his successor Nahuys van Burgst! Indeed, in the nineteenth century Frans Valck, the Dutch Resident and amateur historian seems to have appropriated many archival documents which since have become lost which

may explain this, but if the relationship between Crawford and Diponegoro was indeed as important as Diponegoro claimed, this must have been evident from other sources as well.

The book is well written and often a pleasure to read although the amount of detail is sometimes daunting and at times I found myself wondering if I was really in need of all the information offered. Of course, Diponegoro is not an unknown person and the gist of his life story is well known among Indonesianists and his tragic end is known to all. It is therefore fortunate to see that, Carey does not fall into the trap so succinctly summed up by Antonia Fraser in her biography of Marie Antoinette, another tragic person in history: "Yet hindsight can make bad history" (Antonia Fraser, Author's note to *Marie Antoinette. The Journey*, New York: Anchor books 2002, p. xix) and in her own words "I have attempted, at least so far as humanly possible, to tell Marie Antoinette's dramatic story without anticipating its terrible ending". Interestingly, also writing good history, Carey has done the opposite of what Fraser tried to do, and treated Diponegoro's tragic end as the red thread that links the various chapters of his book and the very title of the book, *The power of prophecy* indeed leaves little space for looking at things in any different way as Carey has done. We now know that he was in for serious trouble after his disastrous Java War adventure, but we should not forget that Diponegoro did not know he was going to end up in Fort Rotterdam in Makassar when he set out to do the things he wanted to achieve and he did not have the sources we have at his disposal to make sense of what was happening to him and around him. In Antonia Fraser's case, she could use a wealth of highly personal information in the form of diaries and memoirs but to come to a true (whatever that is) picture of Queen Marie Antoinette proved to be just as difficult as sketching a reliable portrait of Prince Diponegoro. The sources are different, but the interpretation of many of these sources proved to be just as hard.

So who was this Diponegoro? This is not an easy question and Carey is the first to point out that perhaps his book also does not provide the answer, and indeed, for me it does not. In his own words, his portrait of the prince is "almost like a *pointilliste* sketch of the Post-Impressionist school, a number of tiny dots which put together give an illusion of depth, movement, and colour but which at the end of the day is just that, an impression if not a *trompe l'œil*" (p. 125). The fact that Diponegoro is also an Indonesian national hero who has been the subject of much mystification has also not made Carey's task any simpler because of all the works written about him and the distortions that the position of national hero inevitably seems to bring.

One of the most difficult things to achieve in writing a fat book on a distant person like Diponegoro is how to catch and to keep the reader's attention. I must say that occasionally my mind drifted when I was reading the book. The amount of detail was sometimes too overwhelming and the explanation of the complexity of the political and colonial situation in south-central Java at the time was such that at times I found my mind wandering. Too much

detail is killing here because we lose the story line and become distracted by things that are not really all that important. What is important here is how to capture the attention of the reader in such a way that he or she does not run off but basically wants to know "how the book ends". Barbara Tuchman has said some interesting things about this in her fascinating book *Practicing history* (Ballentine Books, New York, 1982). In her chapter "History by the Ounce" she mentions the issue of "corroborative detail". She mentions that Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado* added some details because this was in his words "corroborative detail intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative" (p. 34). In other words, sticking to the facts alone does not make a readable book. This is what Carey also applies in his book but unfortunately not often enough in my view. The best example of this is on page 357.

In front were troops of the three king's line (infantry) regiments which had taken part in the assault: the 14th (Buckinghamshires), 59th (2nd Nottinghamshires), and the two rifle companies of the 78th Highland Regiment of Foot (Ross-shire Buffs), one of whose officers had secured the person of the sultan at the time of the surrender of the *kraton*. Dressed in red jackets, green cotton trousers and knobbed helmets with circlets of gold, the three-faced blade of their bayonets glinted in the light of the setting sun as they presented arms. Between them were the sepoy troops with green jackets and breeches, white camisoles, silver-braided shoulder bands and epaulettes, and fez-like mob caps. Many were heavily bearded and, according to both Raffles and the chronicle, they created a terrifying impression among the watching Javanese.

This short description is absolutely brilliant. In its stunning detail, it becomes almost sarcastic while it evokes the atmosphere at the time and the differences between the Javanese and British worlds in elegant and poignant prose. The use of old-fashioned words like bayonets, camisoles, breeches and silver-braided shoulder bands indeed bring us back to the past and to the – for our modern times – almost ridiculous impracticality of all these sartorial details, especially in the tropics. Some similar descriptions about the *kraton* or about the sultan and his troops in Javanese dress might have enlivened the book more than it does now.

The book is especially interesting for what it can teach us of present-day Indonesian politics and political behaviour. Making unenforceable regulations was apparently already done in Yogyakarta in 1802 (p. 64) and the use of bandits for political means (now known as premanism) appears to have a long history as well (p. 498) as does the hatred towards the Chinese as a totality instead of as individuals. Talking to my servant in Jakarta I also have the impression that Crawford's remark, "peasants who live as close neighbours in the same village often have as little to do with each other as those who live at a distance of twenty miles" (p. 35) is still very much true today. Precursors to the present include corruption and half-hearted measures taken against it (by the Dutch and Javanese alike!), and the curious notion of the *dwifungsi* of the army (pp. 585, 606, 650-651, 655). The shifting allegiance of the people of religion and the peasantry towards changes and those making them is also an

interesting feature that is still very much part of the present-day Indonesian political constellation and the changing relations between the State and Islam in this period (the alliance of *satria* and *santri*, p. 639) is also worthwhile contemplating in the modern context.

My main criticism is of an orthographic nature. I cannot understand why the author (or was it the KITLV) has opted for a spelling of the Javanese proper names based on the Javanese writing system and not on the way Javanese names are pronounced and officially spelled nowadays. In the Javanese writing system, a basic character is accompanied by the vowel /a/ and only if another vowel or no vowel is needed, extra characters are added. The problem with the vowel /a/ is that it is pronounced in different ways depending on its position in the word. In short, in an open syllable the /a/ is pronounced /o/ in pairs of two starting from the back. The transcription of the Javanese characters for his name would result in the spelling Dipanagara but the pronunciation is Diponegoro, under which name indeed he is usually known. By spelling Dipanagara – and by spelling all Javanese names, words, titles, place names and others in this way – the pronunciation becomes highly unorthodox. For me this hypercorrect way of spelling is curious, unnecessary, and would best have been avoided. The book is not concerned with philology and most names and Javanese words used in the book are not directly derived from manuscripts to begin with. Furthermore, no space at all has been devoted to explain to the reader how to pronounce all this, which could easily have been afforded. It might even lead to the curious situation that the book is unfindable because of this spelling. Trying to find books on Diponegoro in any catalogue of any library not specialized in Indonesian or Javanese books may lead to the curious situation that Peter Carey's book will not be found, as cross references with Dipanagara will not have been made. As it stands now, all the names sound Sundanese!

Some minor points may be addressed in a future reprint. The word sultan is spelled without a capital whereas the word Sunan is spelled with a capital throughout as are titles such as Crown Prince, Prince Regent, Resident, but prime minister, governor general are not spelled with initial capital. Some further consistency may be in order here. I don't understand why Diponegoro's letter is said to have been written in unvocalized pegon script. In my view it is vocalized (Illustration 69, p. 672). Quite some space has been afforded to the two paintings depicting Diponegoro's capture made by Pieneman and Raden Saleh but unfortunately they have not been included in the book whereas many other illustrations have been added without any comment. The paper used for the book has caused some pictures to have become blurred, especially page 198 while also the maps suffer from being unclear. If another edition is forthcoming, it is to be hoped that the cover will be changed as the present one is exceedingly ugly, misleading and unworthy of this beautiful work. Some other mistakes could easily have been avoided too. The book mentions manuscripts in the National Museum in Jakarta whereas the library collection of the museum and its manuscripts have since long been moved

to the Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, the Indonesian National Library.

Conclusion. The book is a very important addition to Javanese historiography. It is a welcome and comprehensive description of one of the most important times in modern Javanese history and of one of the most important Javanese actors in that history. Peter Carey should be thanked wholeheartedly for his efforts over the last 30 years in writing this magnificent book.
